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# SUPERINTENDENT LUNA APPLAUDS INCREASED FLEXIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STATES

BOISE – Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna joined President Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at the White House today as they unveiled a new process for states to gain more flexibility and increased accountability in education.

Under the plan, Idaho and other states can get a waiver under the federal No Child Left Behind law to create new systems of increased accountability that focus on academic growth and college and career readiness.

“This will not be a waiver from accountability, but it will give the necessary flexibility states need to increase accountability and focus on making sure every student in Idaho is growing academically every year they are in school,” Superintendent Luna said. “I believe this is a symbolic shift of power from the federal government back to the states.”

Idaho has taken a lead role in building the next generation of accountability systems. By passing the Students Come First reform laws, the state has moved toward an education system based on academic growth and better preparing students for the world that awaits them after high school. Superintendent Luna worked with other states to develop key principles for new accountability systems through his role as President-Elect of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

In June, Superintendent Luna sent a letter to Secretary Duncan, informing him that Idaho would also start moving toward a new system of increased accountability since Congress has not reauthorized No Child Left Behind. The new system would include more flexibility for school districts and a new accountability system that measures growth.

Under the current No Child Left Behind law, states can only measure school success based on proficiency – or how many students pass the test. The federal law, which originally passed in 2001, was supposed to be reauthorized four years ago so states could include academic growth, or how much progress a student makes in a given year. However, Congress has not taken action on reauthorization.

Today, the President and Secretary Duncan announced a process for states to request waivers from the current No Child Left Behind law. With a waiver, Idaho can create its new system of increased accountability based on higher standards, academic growth, and improved performance evaluations for educators – all key components of the Students Come First reform laws.

States can begin applying for waivers in November. Superintendent Luna plans to work with the Idaho State Board of Education on Idaho’s application.

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